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SENATE

} REPORT
} No. 847

TO PROMOTE THE MINING OF POTASH ON THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

JANUARY 5 (calendar day, JANUARY 8), 1925.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. LADD, from the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 3005]

The Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, to whom was referred the bill (S. 3005) to promote the mining of potash on the public domain, having considered the same, reports thereon favorably, without amendment and recommends it do pass.

The recommendations of the Interior Department are indicated by the reports submitted by them as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 1, 1924.

HON. EDWIN F. LADD,
*Chairman Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR LADD: I transmit herewith for consideration a draft of a proposed bill to promote the mining of potash on the public domain. The proposed measure is intended to supersede the act of October 2, 1917 (40 Stat. 297), entitled "An act to authorize exploration for and disposition of potassium," to remedy the defects in said law and to unify the leasing laws by harmonizing the potassium leasing act with that of the general leasing law of February 25, 1920 (41 Stat. 437).

The main objections to the act of October 2, 1917, *supra*, are the award of unlimited patent to one-fourth the area embraced in the prospecting permit, the omission of any authority for the exercise of discretion in granting such permits, the possibility of obtaining title to valuable mineral substances other than potassium, and the probability that the only lands in the permit containing potassium may be patented. It has also developed that the patented lands in some cases appear to have been taken with a view to isolating other lands in such a manner that leasing of the remaining lands of the permit is not probable, because of their small size, scattered nature, inaccessibility, and the ease with which they can be drained of their brine from the surrounding lands.

It appears that the present potash law was originally a part of H. R. 16136, Sixty-third Congress, and H. R. 406 in the Sixty-fourth Congress; that it was separated from these proposed measures as a war measure prior to the full maturity of the leasing policy of the Government as expressed in the act of February 25,

1920, *supra*. It is probable that if such separation had not taken place the potash deposits would have been treated as other minerals of like nature are treated in the act of February 25, 1920, and that no authority for patent for any of the lands would have been given.

In order to harmonize the methods of disposal of potash deposits with the provisions of the general leasing law I respectfully recommend the enactment of the proposed legislation.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 18, 1924.

Hon. EDWIN F. LADD,
*Chairman Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR LADD: I have examined the copy of S. 3005, submitted by you, entitled "To promote the mining of potash on the public domain."

The proposed law is intended to repeal the act of October 2, 1917 (40 Stat. 297), entitled "An act to authorize exploration for and disposition of potassium," and to provide methods for the disposal of potash deposits, on lands belonging to the United States, in harmony with the provisions of the general leasing act of February 25, 1920 (41 Stat. 437).

I recommend favorably upon the proposed law.

Very truly yours,

E. C. FINNEY, *Acting Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, November 28, 1924.

Hon. E. F. LADD,
*Chairman Committee on Public Lands,
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR LADD: I trust you may see your way clear to obtain early action upon S. 3005, a bill to promote the mining of potash on the public domain.

The reasons stated in my letter to you of April 1, 1924, still obtain; in fact, later developments on the public domain emphasize the importance of eliminating the provision of law which allows the prospector to obtain patent to one-fourth of the area embraced in a potash prospecting permit. Moreover, the advantage of placing potash leases on the same basis as those made under the act of February 25, 1920, is obvious.

The Bureau of Mines, the Geological Survey, and the General Land Office, which have to deal with various phases of the matter, are emphatic in their recommendations for the proposed amendatory legislation.

Sincerely yours,

HUBERT WORK, *Secretary.*